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## SILENTWORLD

養:ごお

イラスト: 空中幼彩

025

## 乃木若葉は 勇者である

企画原案・シリーズ構成: タカヒロ(みなとそふと)

執筆:朱白あおい イラスト:BUNBUN 監修:Project 2H

043

## アウトロー・ワンダーランド-0-

着:田中ロミオ

キャラクター原案・扉絵:saitom

挿絵:大岩ケンジ

DENGEKI G'z

NOVEŁ

電撃G's magazine 2015年10月号付録② [ DENGEKI G's NOVEL ]



The days of peace continue.

I used to think training everyday was pretty hard, and being at school with just the of us was kinda boring, but once you get used to it you realize it's not actually that bad. Still, we don't know how much longer we can enjoy this period of peace.

With things as they are, I'm kinda worried about



She's the most fragile out of the Shikoku heroes.

But Wakaba doesn't seem to notice it.

Wakaba is strong.

Because she's strong, she might not understand people's weaknesses.

It can't be helped.

I suppose I'll have to look after her.

Just leave it to Tama!.

Hero Record Sep 2018 AD Doi Tamako's Record





August 31st 2018 AD, at the Marugame castle.

Across the window, the summer's blue sky could be seen.

Shikoku's sky looked exactly the same even after the attack. Rather, the city, passing vehicles and people, the whistling of cicadas and the beauty of the Edo sea.

None of it seemed different.

After the invasion, a special tree by the name "Shinju" appeared in Shikoku, and a giant wall made of plant tissue surrounded the island. It is said that Shinju was the incarnation of the local gods, and the wall was a barrier it put up to stop the Vertex.

People are safe as long as they're inside this barrier. Peace was granted inside the confines of this tiny space...Some people started calling Shikoku "The Ark". After this disaster, comparable to great flood from the myth would pass, the world would once again be returned to the people; or so Wakaba thought was their reasoning.

(However...Things were clearly different from before...)

At the moment, the number of people passing by in town grew fewer; among them those wearing a hat or holding an umbrella stood out.

It was no countermeasure against the summer sun.

"Sky fear syndrome"

Some of the people who were present during the attack three years ago were still in a state of shock, and started feared looking up at the sky. The phenomenon was referred to as the "Sky fear syndrome". Severe cases were unable to even step outside a building.

Even now, the scars left by the Vertex's attack on the people's hearts still had not healed.

-"Wa~kaba-chan"

At that moment, Hinata occupied Wakaba's entire field of vision. She looked down on her with reproachful eyes.

Wakaba was using her lap as pillow while Hinata cleaned her ears.

-"There you go making that stern face again. Excess stress and strain are bad for your body. If you're gonna be like that...EI!"

-..5i...

Hinata moved the cotton swab in a circular motion inside Wakaba's ear. Overwhelmed by the pleasant feeling, Wakaba felt the strength draining out of her body.

The serious look from before completely disappeared from her face; her expression changed to that of a baby being lulled to sleep by his mother.

She's had Hinata clean her ears for her for a long time and by now, she could even be called a pro at Wakaba ear-cleaning.

-"There we go, all done"

As she said that, she pulled the swab out. Wakaba, feeling a tiny bit of regret that it's over, got up as well.

-"Now then, it's about time to get in contact with "Nagano". Please go on ahead"

-"Right"

Wakaba picked up the sword next to her, and headed for the broadcasting room.

The Marugame castle was remodelled and used as a school for Wakaba and the others. The exterior design was mostly left intact while the inside sections were slightly modified.

Only 6 students attended that school, 5 "heroes" and a single "Miko".

Heroes are endowed with the power of the local gods in order to fight off the Vertex. Wakaba was one such Hero, who awakened to her power during the invasion three years ago.

There are currently 5 heroes in Shikoku, all of which are attending this school.

A Miko is an oracle who can hear the voice of the gods. Thanks to that ability, Hinata was able to save numerous people during the attack.

Although it says "hearing the voice of the gods", it is not through common speech, but rather in the form of symbols and suggestive hints that instructions are transmitted to her.

Both the Heroes and the Miko are young girls.

Only the purest of girls are able to come in contact with the gods who detest impurity.

Wakaba was also chosen as a temporary leader for the Shikoku heroes.

She made her way into the broadcasting room, pressed the radio switch and started it up.

After a bit of static noise cleared, the calm voice of a young girl could be heard from the radio.

-"...Shiratori here, speaking from Nagano. Now starting up the hero communication"

-"Nogi from Kagawa here. I'll be in your care"



An area in the east southern part of the Suwa Lake in Nagano prefecture was similar to Shikoku, a place protected by a barrier where people could live.

Shiratori was the only hero in charge of protecting it.

- -"Shiratori-san, how's the situation there?"
- -"Not fantastic; not that it has ever been since that day three years ago"
- -"...No kidding"

Wakaba strived not to sound too gloomy.

Originally, a larger area with the Suwa lake at the center was a safe zone, but due to the repeated attacks that followed during the three years, land was lost and only a portion in the east southern area of the lake could be maintained.

-"For now, Maintaining the status-quo wou-...bzzzzzt.....ity"

Shiratori's voice was cut.

- -"Sorry, It appears there was some noise"
- -"Right; As I was saying, maintaining the status-quo should be our priority for now. This line of communication has been getting more and more unstable lately"
- -"Yeah..."
- -"I wonder how much longer we'll be able to use it..."

As she thought about it, Wakaba felt slightly depressed. In order not to show it, she quickly changed the subject.

- -"Speaking of which, Shiratori-san. Isn't it about time we settled our score..."
- -"Yes, I myself was thinking the exact same thing. Today is the day we put an end to it..."

Shiratori gave a bold response.

-"Which of the two is superior, Udon or Soba!!"

Both voices spoke at the same time.

- -"Udon is obviously superior, there is no room for comparison"
- -"Exactly, no comparison is needed. Soba is clearly better"
- -"...What foolishness. Have you even tasted Kagawa's Udon before? That mysterious feel to it, that glittering whiteness, that excquisite deliciousness that you can never get enough of...Something like Soba could never compare"
- -"fufufu, and have YOU ever eaten Nagano's Soba, Nogi-san? That elegant fragrance, that rich feeling of it going down your throat, that perfect combination of soup and noodles...It is superior to Udon in every way"



As the two listened to each-other's words, they replied back.

- -"...Well, Not only does Soba win in the taste department, it is also good for your health. Soba contains Rutin which helps prevent atherosclerosis and various lifestyle diseases. In other words, a perfectly healthy meal"
- -"Hah, and here I was wondering what you were gonna say next. If we're talking about non-taste related things, then Udon is the easiest to digest out of all types of noodles. Even in the case of those suffering from exhaustion or some type of disease reducing their bodily functionalities, it can provide them with the necessary energy quickly. This here is extremely vital for a warrior. Udon could even be described as the supreme nutrient for battle."

The two go deep in thought, planning their next rebuttal.

At that moment, the sound of the chime echoed throughout the building. Although it was summer break, the chime always rang at the exact time.

- -"Out of time, huh. Looks like Soba was spared"
- -"That is my line, Udon is the one that managed to escape with its life...The new semester starts tomorrow, so it would be best if we left communication until after classes were over"
- -"A fair point. Well then, until tomorrow. I pray for your safety and good luck at Nagano"
- -"May you be safe at Shikoku as well"

Wakaba hung up.

Her light exchanges with Shiratori were very dear to her. Since she could not leave Shikoku, this was the closest thing to the "outside" she had left. It let her feel safe knowing there was a friend out there fighting as well.

The next day.

August has ended, and the new semester started.

Even during summer break, Wakaba and the others kept coming to school for their training, so it didn't exactly feel like a "new semester" to them. The heroes and the Miko were the final hope of mankind against the Vertex, there was absolutely no way they would miss their daily training.

第2話 Flower Bud



As usual, the earliest to arrive is Wakaba, she lightly cleaned up the classroom and prepared the chalk for the blackboard and such.

-"Morning'!! Ah, You're here first again Wakaba. Just when Tama finally thought she'd be the first to make it!"

The next to arrive was Doi Tamako. She was also a Hero just like Wakaba. Tamako with her short figure entered the classroom.

And, as if hiding behind her, Iyojima Anzu followed in her steps. well, technically speaking, since she was taller than Tamako she wasn't hiding in the slightest.

It simply looked that way, because of her calm demeanour compared to Tamako's lively personality. Anzu was also one of the heroes.

- -"Good morning, Doi, Iyojima"
- -"Wakaba!! Tomorrow Tama will definitely get here first!"

Tamako pointed at Wakaba, as she made her declaration. For some reason, she burned with competitive spirit towards Wakaba. Wakaba thought pleasantly of her tiny posture.

-"Tamacchi, you shouldn't pick up a fight first thing in the morning~"

Anzu called out to her in an attempt to appease her. Tamako then turned around and looked at her with scornful eyes.

- -"A~N~ZU~. What the hell is "Tamacchi"?! Tama is older than you. Call me Tamacchi-senpai!"
- -"I like Tamacchi better..."

Anzu let out a bitter smile.

Tamako and Wakaba were both in their second year of middle school, while Anzu was a year below. School years were all mixed up since all the heroes from Shikoku gathered in here. Tamako and Anzu were like siblings...however people's opinions often split on which was the older and which was the younger sister.

Next to arrive was Hinata.

-"Good morning, everyone"

Her calm voice and graceful expression, her elegant demeanour made you doubt she was the same age as the others.

As Tamako turned around to face Hinata, she glanced at her posture her upper half in particular and back to her child-like body, then said in her frustration.

- -"Kuh...Look at you exposing those devilish lumps once again! Prepare to receive your punishment!!"
- -"Wait...Tamacchi-san, please stop fondling my breasts!"
- -"I'm not fondling them! I'm trying to tear them off!"

Tamako started massaging Hinata's bountiful chest.

Wakaba and Anzu quickly pulled the rabid Tamako away from Hinata.

- -"LET ME GO! Tama needs to punish those demonic things"
- -"Calm yourself, Doi!"
- -"That's right. You're still growing Tamacchi-senpai!"
- -"Uwaa~n! Now even Anzu is looking down on me!"

In the midst of the commotion, Koori Chikage entered the classroom. She was also a hero and 3rd year middle schooler.

Chikage looked toward the group, then averted her eyes out of disinterest as she made her way to her seat. She wasn't very talkative and seemed to avoid interacting with other people.

Finally, right before the final chime rang, Takashima Yuuna made it to the classroom. She also was a 2nd year and a hero.

-"Good morning~! Takashima Yuuna has arrived. Thank god, I'm not late!"

Yuuna exchanged greetings with everyone in the classroom, and headed for her seat beside Chikage.

- -"Good morning...Takashima-san"
- -"Morning, Gun-chan!"
- -"You were...late today"
- -"Yeah, I was watching this martial arts program on TV yesterday, and tried mimicking and practicing the moves as I watched. I got too excited and couldn't sleep. HA! CHOP! ROUND HOUSE KICK!"

Yuuna swung her arm down and did a 360° kick.

- -"Takashima-san...You shouldn't raise your leg so high...Your underwear would be visible"
- -"Ah! ehehe..."

Yuuna held her skirt down while blushing.

The silent Chikage, could often be seen talking only to Yuuna. Chikage was older, but just like Tamako and Anzu they heeded no attention to the age difference and treated each other as equals.

Yuuna had a very likeable personality, and got along with everyone in the class. Even Chikage who tended to build walls around herself could not turn her down.



The morning classes had started.

Although the only students at this school were heroes and a Miko, subjects were no different than a normal one. In addition, they received special training to fight off the Vertex.

As a first order of their training on this new semester, they were shown visual recordings of the battle the JDF fought against the Vertex three years ago.

In the footage, rifles and tank canons were fired at the Vertex that appeared in the city, but not only did it not hurt them, it didn't even seem to have any effect. The Vertex swarmed the tanks like ants, ate through the steel shells and devoured the people inside as if they were a meal for them.

Normal weapons were useless against the Vertex, only those that the Heroes wielded could inflict damage upon them.

Wakaba's weapon was a sword she obtained from the shrine in Izumo, three years ago. From a scientific analysis of the material, it looked no more than a sword made after the Heian period. However, the moment Wakaba shows the will to fight and takes it in her hand, the sword gets filled with divine energy.

A certain Miko called the power flowing through Wakaba's sword "Ikutachi".

The other heroes also each had a special weapon.

At the end of the footage, the homeroom teacher said.

-"Only heroes have the ability to stand against the Vertex. Your power is needed."

Wakaba and the others had seen the recordings and listened to those words numerous times before.

What exactly are Vertex?

Why is mankind being attacked?

The details were still unclear.

One thing was for certain, the fact that the Vertex were the enemy of mankind, and that the local gods were lending their powers in order to protect the people.

-"In that case...Why don't those gods go fight them..."

Chikage mumbled while watching.

Tamako was the one to answer her.

-"Maybe they did fight them. Remember, before the attack an earthquake or natural disaster would occur. I think that was the result of the gods going at it"

Chikage looked unsatisfied as she went silent.

第2話 Flower Bud



Next up was combat training. Hinata alone was taken to a different place for her Miko training.

-"Aah~; The sight of Wakaba-chan engrossed in her training...her sparkling sweat and flustered skin...I want to add it all to my Wakaba-chan collection..."

Hinata always says while looking disappointed, but she of course wouldn't disobey orders for such a selfish reason.

The training menu was varied, from exercises to build up stamina to basic teachings of martial arts and even zen meditation to strengthen the mind.

Ever since that day 3 years ago, Wakaba and the others haven't fought any Vertex, but eventually, in order to take the world back from them the battle can not be avoided. There was also a high possibility Shikoku would be attacked soon. Preparations for a fight were of the utmost necessity.

Morning period has ended, and it was time for lunch break. The 6 always headed to the cafeteria together.

Wakaba was the one who suggested they always ate lunch together this way; It could be a great help in improving their teamwork.

Chikage and Tamako slightly objected at first. Chikage preferred eating alone, while Tamako didn't want rules applied to her mealtime as well. But when Yuuna said "Meals always taste better when eaten together!", Tamako let out a better smile while Chikage said "If Takashima-san says so..." and both ended up agreeing.

There were adults as well in the cafeteria. The teachers in charge of the girls' education, and members of the organisation given full authority by the government to deal with the Vertex, "Taisha". "Taisha" was written with the characters for "Great Shrine", and has been publicly active ever since the start of the invasion.





Each of the girls served herself and they all gathered at a single table. They were not charged for their food.

Although it was a self-serve format, they all ended up with Udon on their plates; the toppings differed however.

-"The meal after training tastes the best!"

Yuuna said with a carefree smile, as she slurped her Udon.

Chikage looked at her pleasantly.

-"Hey, Anzu. Watch your manners"

Anzu was reading a book while eating, Tamako then snatched it away from her.

-"Aah! But I was just getting to the good part..."

Anzu let out a sad voice. The book she was reading was a Shoujo novel aimed at mid-high schoolers. She loved reading and always had a book stuffed in her pocket.

-"No buts. Finish your meal, then you can have it back"

-"Fi~ne..."

Anzu gave up and went back to her Udon.

-"...Still, why do we have to go through training every single say"

Tamako said grumbling.

-"It's because only heroes have a chance against the Vertex..."

-"I know that, Hinata. But normal middle school girls usually hang out with their friends...Or fall in love or something. That's the kind of life they should be leading, no?"

Tamako sighed to herself.

-"This is an extreme emergency situation. Having our freedom slightly limited can't be helped."

Tamako crossed her arms, not convinced by Wakaba's answer.

-"Hmmm...."

-"If we refuse to cooperate, mankind will meet its doom. We have to become the spears that prot-"

-"I know! I am fully aware, but still"

Tamako raise her voice, then immediately looked down and mumbled.

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-"...I'm sorry..."
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Anzu grabbed the edge of Tamako's uniform and looked up to her. Her eyes, filled with anxiety.

The scene went completely silent.

Wakaba understood what Tamako was going through. She wasn't speaking out of selfishness nor discontent. She was feeling anxious. The battle against Vertex was full of danger. If it came down to it, it was uncertain if they could even survive...Rather, the probability of them losing their lives in the process was higher. Three years ago, if Hinata weren't present during the time of the battle, Wakaba might have died then and there.

(Doi probably fears for Iyojima's safety more than her owns...)

Wakaba thought as she looked at Tamako.

Iyojima Anzu wasn't particularly good at sports, and had the worst results when it came to martial arts training. In battle, she would be the highest candidate to lose her life.

The one who broke the heavy silence was Yuuna.

-"Thanks for the food! It was great as always!"

She put the bowl, completely empty on the table; Yuuna then joined her hands and looked around at everyone at the table.

-"What's with the long faces, everyone?"

-"...Takashima...Haven't you been listening?"

-"Eh, ahh...Sorry Wakaba-chan! the Udon was so good that I completely lost track of my surroundings..."

Everyone then let out a sigh.

-"Eeeh?! what was that for?!"

Yuuna looked around at everyone.

-"Everything is gonna be fine. We're all strong to begin with, if we all do our best we'll definitely succeed!"

She said with a smile.

After lunch, walking alone in the corridor, Wakaba whispered to Hinata.

<sup>-&</sup>quot;Tamacchi-senpai..."



- -"Perhaps...I'm not fit to be the leader"
- -"What makes you say that?"
- -"I tend to force my thoughts on everyone else, which usually causes opposition to arise disrupting the balance of the group. Someone like Takashima is much more suited for the role than I..."

-"EI!"

Hinata held Wakaba in her arms, interrupting her words.

- -"Hi-Hinata?!"
- -"What are you whining about, that's so unlike you Wakaba-chan. You're doing a perfectly fine job being leader"

-"..."

Hinata's words echoed through her heart. She didn't know if that were really the case.

After school, Wakaba headed to the broadcasting room. She was waiting for Shiratori to pick up, but there was no answer no matter how much she called Nagano.

As the sun went down, the call finally went through.

-"Sorry....bzzzt...-san. I had som....bzzt....ake care of"

There was a lot of static. The line was unstable.

- -"Don't sweat it, did something happen over there?"
- -"This afternoon, there was a battle against the Vertex"
- -"...How's the damage?"
- -"There were no problems...bzzzt...The enemy was driven back. there were no casualities"
- -"I see..."

Wakaba let out a sigh of relief after hearing the noise-filled report. She only spoke to Shiratori through this radio, but she was a dear and irreplaceable friend to her. She truly was thankful that both she and Nagano were safe.

- -"How's the situation at Shikoku?"
- -"Same as always, so far no attacks. We spent the day training and attending classes"
- -"I s....bzzzt.....I'm relieved"

Wakaba told Shiratori about what happened during lunch today. The uneasiness everyone's feeling and the nature of her relationship with the others...She thought Shiratori might provide her with some useful advice.

-"I see...I also used to have the same worries at first, but you eventually stop thinking about such things.....bzzzt.....Reality is much more heavy than thoughts, and forces us to make certain decisions"

Shiratori sounded as if those words were meant for her as well.

The days passed by without any major changes.

Wakaba and the others went to classes and received their Hero and Miko training as usual.

Once in a while, someone would display a hint of discomfort or uneasiness, but it had no impact on their daily lives.

The noise-filled calls to Nagano also continued.

-"We're getting nowhere constantly arguing about Udon and Soba...bzzzt...Let's talk about a different specialty today"

-"very well, we here at Marugame in Kagawa, have Honetsukitori, a dish that'll have anyone who tasted it once get addicted to it."

-"Fufufu, Nagano has Shinshuumiso whose name resounds throughout all of Japan...!"

Training at school is the same as always.

Contact with Nagano was also kept regularly.

However, there were days where the line would be so unstable, or completely unusable. The amount of static also increased which made the interchange harder and harder.

A few weeks later, the situation at Nagano became decisive.

-"I'm sorry, The line....bzzzt....bad.....bzzzt...."

The noise was rather high that day; from the way she spoke, a slight hint of exhaustion could be felt from Shiratori's voice.

-"What's wrong? Did something happen?"

-"...No, I just had to fight a rather persistent Vertex...bzzzt....ack seems to have damaged the radio...bzzzt....might not be able to talk for a while....bzzzzt....I'm sure you also have your fair share of worries, but do your best....bzzzt.....everything will be okay. I also thought it was an impossible task at first.....bzzzt....was able to keep on going for two more years...bzzzzt......"



-"Shiratori-san?! Can you hear me?!!"

After a long wave of noise

-"...Nogi-san, the rest is in your hands"

Those were the final words before the line completely shut.

Wakaba gazed at the sea from the inner keep of the Marugame castle.

The sun was setting at the edge of the horizon. Its color changed from a crimson red to a dark purple.

-"Wakaba-chan, this is where you've been"

Hinata hurried to her side.

-"I've been looking for you. They said you haven't gone home yet even though it's this late...Have you been talking to Shiratori-san?"

-"...The call was interrupted. I tried calling back many times, but it seems the line itself became unusable..."

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Hinata was at a loss for words.

She could easily imagine what Wakaba meant by that.

-"It's over...for Nagano"

Wakaba said nothing, she silently gave a nod.

She held her sword so strongly that her hand hurt.

The Vertex took yet another precious thing from Wakaba.

Suddenly, Wakaba's phone made a ringing noise, like an alarm.

The distant waves in the sea, the boats crossing the water, the cicadas' cries, the leaves swaying in the wind...All came to a stop.

Standing next to Wakaba, Hinata also seemed to be frozen in place.

-"...\$!"

Wakaba immediately looked at her phone. Displayed on the screen were the words "Forestize warning".

Forestization...A phenomenon that occurred the moment a Vertex stepped inside the barrier.

Wakaba learned about it in class.

Ever since Shinju put up the wall around Shikoku, it would occur in order to protect the people inside.

-"They finally came...The Vertex..."

After destroying Nagano, it was now Shikoku's turn as the final shelter of mankind. The sight in front of Wakaba's eyes was rapidly changing. The land, buildings, cars and people were covered by gigantic tree roots and ivies extending all the way to edge of the sea.

(Shiratori-san, people from Nagano...Your pain, sorrow, anger...I'll definitely make the Vertex pay the price for them. Everything is worthy of reward, that is the way of life of the Nogi.)

Wakaba drew her sword, and pointed it beyond the sea.

-"I have taken over the duty of protecting mankind from Nagano. We, heroes of Shikoku will intercept the enemy atop this Marugame castle!!"

Chapter 2 - end.